Mary Stuart Hunter Presentation Transcript

[Ms. Stuart Hunter] Good morning everyone. I figure the first five minutes my comments should be listening to how I talk and then after that you will be listening to what I am saying. Some of you may know I was scheduled to speak to you at the third symposium, but a medical issue sidelined me for a few months, so it is especially nice that I am able to be here today. I was coming in from the airport on a shuttle to the hotel last night and the young man that was driving the shuttle asked me if I had ever been here before (to Lansing) and it occurred to me as I tried to answer the question that it had been 34 years since I had been in Lansing. I was a different person then and Lansing was a different place then. It is good to be back and especially nice to be in a place that has already gotten chilly. South Carolina is still very, very warm. So thank you for the invitation as I am especially interested in talking with you in groups like this; groups that are different than the groups I typically talk with. My interest in this topic and the work that you are all doing in this topic really was peaked about three years ago at the national conference of first year experience that our National Resource Center hosted. A man from the U. S. Department of Education Default Prevention Unit came and asked me if he could have five or ten minutes so that he could go sit down in a corner of the hotel and talk. His interest in student success was very compelling to me. I, quite frankly, had never thought about student loan success from the loan default perspective. I realized that we had a real synergy there.

There was interest from those of you who work with students through financial aid, grants, and scholarships as well as those who work at our National Resource Center. So it is very exciting for me to be here today. I hope that during my presentation that I am going to learn as much from you as you learn from me. I am also pleased I am going to be able to stay for the remainder of the day and learn from the other presenters and to learn from the dialog discussion after lunch.

So, I am looking at this from a peer perspective and hope to learn a lot today myself. Student success has been my life work and passion so I have a lot that I can share with you as I have put together a presentation that will approach student success from a generic way, hoping that, through the interactions of this session you will be able to apply some of the things that I will be sharing with you to your particular work. Now that you all have had a fresh cup of coffee and you're wide awake I am going to be engaging you in this presentation and I expect to hear from you throughout the next ninety minutes.

Why all this interest in student success in the first place? You will note in your notebook and the handout sheet that I don't have a PowerPoint, but have notes that hopefully you will be able to follow along and be able to make notes on the first page after the first tab in your notebooks. Feel free to follow along and interrupt me if you have a comment or question at any point. I hope in the next ninety minutes we all will be learning together.

Again, so why all this interest in student success in the first place? Well what we know is that institutions spend an incredible amount of money in recruiting students to attend their institution. So, if students are going to be expensive to recruit, we also know it is in the best interest of the institutions that most students be successful. It is far less expensive to have students remain at our institutions than it is to recruit a whole new crop of students.

Just from the very base bottom line, student success is important to our intuitions bottom line. We also know that the future of this country and our world is up to the next generation of students. So we want students who are going to be successful and want to learn and develop into the types of citizens that we want to go out and make a difference.

We also note that student success leads to student retention and student persistence is preferred over attrition. We also note that cognitive measures alone do not guarantee student success. There are also positive correlations between those students who succeed in college and success in life beyond college and so anything we can do while students are with us at our institutions to be more successful and fulfilled, to be better university and college students, we know they will be better life citizens as well.

So what are some of the issues that make student success a challenge for us? There are a number of issues related to this so I want to share and have you share some with me. For those of us who have been to college, I'm assuming everybody in this room. We know that the first year of college is not the same as the last year of high school. The first year of college is not grade thirteen. Things are very different. The cultures are different between high school and college. The cultures are very different for our adult students from life before college to life in college. We know that expectations are different and we know that every thing about it is different.

I want you to turn to your neighbor and talk with someone about the at least two things that are different about the culture of high school and the culture of college. (Audience discussion continues.) Discuss the expectations, the things we expect them to do in college compared to high school. Who can share one thing that is different between high school and college? Audience reply: Less hand-holding in college and attendance is optional. As students in high school we kind of keep tabs on them and if they are not there then we know they were not in class. In college there is much less hand-holding.

What else is different? There is less peer pressure in college with fewer cliques, in groups; at least in the beginning. What we know is when students first go off to college their almost starting off with a new slate. It's like they are beginning again. Yes, those groups do form, but they are not nearly as powerful and sustained in college as they are in high school. And our hope is that kids in college are thinking more on their own. College students have much less structure and they have to take responsibility for the decisions they make and the consequences of those decisions far more than in high school. You get a bill and it's much more costly. You must find a way to pay for college.

The academic challenges are tremendously different. And especially for the students who did well in high school tend to be the ones who continue onto college. Suddenly they look around and the 90 percent of students in high school that made them look good are not there. The bar has been raised substantially. We also know that at least in South Carolina and I assume here is as well, that senior year is pretty quick and simple. They tend to glide through that senior year. Then they get to college where the expectations are higher and it's a wake-up call and some of them don't wake up fast enough. It takes them a little bit longer to get into the groove.

Time management and priority management are critical for first-year students and all students for that matter. But critical, especially, as we said earlier they are on their own and don't have someone standing over them telling them you must do this. Living arrangements can change and just daily living skills. How many students do we know that have always just had a plate put down in front of them and are having laundry done for them? Suddenly they have to do those things on their own. There is definitely more responsibility required for just day-to-day existence. They have no one standing over them tell them you must do this, this, and this.

The diversity in higher education is far more enriching than it is in high school. Typically you are faced with many people who are different than you in many aspects such as age, ethnicity, background, country of origin, or whatever. Regarding academics, in high school you had many data points to determine your grade. There are frequent tests, homework, and papers that all add up to comprise your grade total. Whereas in college you may have just a mid-term and a final, perhaps a term paper and that's all there is. So it makes those individual grading data

points much more critical and far more important. Just the speed of which content is covered in college is significant.

So if we agree that the first year of college and universities first-year experience is not the same as the grade thirteen. It's not the same as it was in high school. We know that osmoses is not going to help them learn to be college students. Just because they walk on our campus doesn't mean that they know how to be successful college students. What can we do? What are some of the things we know can make a difference? We know that behavior patterns are set very early in college. We know that the first weeks and months are critically important. Knowing that, it is very difficult for us not to try to cram everything we know about student success into their heads in the first three weeks. We also know that learning things (it's the same for us) has to be developmentally appropriate. If we try to teach time management to students the first week of class, they probably are not going to appreciate that because they don't have any time management problems yet. They haven't had that first test or mid-term yet. They are still in the fun and games of the honeymoon phase. It's not like they are ready to learn that yet.
As we think about how we help students learn we need to think developmentally and about when is going to be the best time to teach them.

We also noted earlier those peers are a very powerful experience and influence. In high school the peers tend to be extremely important, but in college the peers are also very important. But I contend the peers that can be most important to our college students are those who they look up to as role models. They may be a year or two ahead of them and may be a powerful influence. I think that for many of us on college and university campuses we don't realize this untapped potential as role models that can influence student success. We know these things are important and we know there are issues related to the transition.

What can we do? First of all I suggest we get to know who our students are. There are lots of ways we can get to know who our students are and lots of ways to learn what their needs and characteristics are. I want to share a few of those with you. First of all, you will probably recall that every January that the Cooperative Institutional Research Program comes out with the results of the National Freshman Survey. You see the data in January in all the national media outlets. You hear it on the national networks and about everywhere. They have been doing this longitudinal study on entering college students for years and years for the past 35 to 38 years. And what this survey does is have us look at trends about what we know about students from a national perspective and talk about what was different from just a few years back and previous years. If your institution participates in that program survey then you have institutional specific data that you can compare to national normative data results. If you don't participate in that survey at least you can look at the trend in the national data.

We also know there has been at lot on the news about generational differences. We know that for our traditional age students, that the millennial age students are much different than many of us in this room. So understanding what motivates students today and what gets their attention, how they learn and engage with institutions, or with other individuals for that matter, can be very useful. If your students are primarily traditional age then that can be very useful to you. If your students are spread out age wise, as many campuses are, then that gets a little more challenging. Still, the generational studies can be very useful.

There is also, I believe, many of your institutions who participate in a National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). There is also a Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). They will tell you a lot about who your students are, so if you participate that will help you know your student.

Another thing that I think is kind of fun to look at, how many of you have heard of the Beloit College Mindset List? If you haven't, it might be worthwhile for you to Google it. A group of faculty members at Beloit College have developed a focus on the traditional 18-19 year old

student. They look at what are the cultural touchstones, what are the students' experiences they have today that have shaped their lives. Whether it's current events or pop icons, I will not forget the time I realized (this of course was a long time ago) that the students were not alive when the Beatles invaded the U.S.; I am showing my age here. The Beloit College Mindset List is a fun thing to do, you just Google Beloit College Mindset List and it will pop up.

The one I liked a couple of years ago just as an example was, they say cut and paste has nothing to do with papers and scissors. That is the kind of thing on there. A couple for this year, oh by the way, the students entering this fall, were born in 1990. That makes you feel old, doesn't it? And they are in the class of 2012.

The three things that I just pulled out just for illustration from the Beloit College Mindset List for this year's class are that 98.6 or has otherwise always has been confirmed through the ear. You know when you take somebody's temperature; you do it now through the ear? That wasn't the case when I was a child. For these students, the Tonight Show has always been hosted by Jay Leno. That wasn't always the case for me and probably the most interesting one especially given where we are with this election right now, that for these students, radio stations have never been required to present both sides of an issue. Years ago that was not the case.

Students today are very different than the way they were when I was a student and many of you in the audience today, so all this national stuff is interesting and good to know. It can help us frame who our students today are, but what is most important, what is specific to your campus? And there are lots of different ways that you can get campus specific information. If you don't have that at your fingertips and you are thinking about students' success, I would encourage you to get some of that information. If you have an Office of Institutional Research, I would go to that office and see what kind of data they have on your students. If you don't have that, at least your Admissions Office can provide some information for you on who your students are, and what the demographic variables are, and what their students are like.

Your Division of Student Affairs, your Department of Student Development, whatever you call it on your campus, probably has some information on which your students are. I would encourage you to gather that information. Especially as you think about planning programs for undergraduate students, it will help you frame what you know.

The other thing, the best resource you have on campus is the students. You can pull them into decision making that you have at your disposal and get information from the students about their needs, their interests and who they are through focus groups, interviews, and through surveys. Never fail to include students in your planning and in your decision making. So if one of our goals for students' success has to do with student persistence, I like to use the word persistence than retention. (End Part I)

What do we know about student persistence and retention? Well, there has been a good bit of work done on this subject over the years and some of you may be familiar with these bodies of work. Let me just give you the highlights here. There are several theories on student retention. Probably the first and the most well known was the one that Vincent Tinto put forth back in the 1970s, 1980s I guess, and he called it student institutional fit. And if you think about it, this is kind of basic information, but what his study did was to confirm and to quantify this. Basically what Tinto said was that when students enter our institutions with a particular background, and instead of characteristics that help them determine their initial commitment to their educational goals, the greater the congruency between the students' individual goals and the institution in which they enroll, the more likely they are to continue their education to be retained by the institution to persist. This is kind of a big "duh" to me "duh", if a student wants to be a landscape architect and your institution doesn't offer landscape architecture as a program, then that fit is not really a good fit. So a student in an institutional fit is pretty critical for student retention.

Another body of literature put together by a number of different people, including Alexander Aston and George Coomb, and lots of people, has to do with involvement and community. Involvement on the campus and the sense of community the students feel. The work here indicates that there is a direct link between the quantity and the quality of student involvement in activities and their academic performance and satisfaction.

Another big duh for me, the more students that are involved, the more they are engaged in what they are doing, the more likely they are to be happy in what they are doing, and to continue to do what they are doing, therefore, continue to stay with us. The positive interactions the students have with their peers bring about a sense of belonging and develop an increased sense of community that they have at our colleges and universities. So they are more likely to invest more in their learning if they feel comfortable, if they are happy in the community, and if they are involved in deeper ways. This has implications from how we structure the curriculum and the kinds of pedagogies that we use in teaching students. Some of which we have control over and some of which none of us are involved in.

The third student retention theory I want to just mention is that of social and academic integration. (Not auditable.) What this work centers around is the fact that undergraduate students will have more valuable learning experience with what they learn outside the classroom is relevant inside the classroom. In other words, relevance is really, really important here. If students can apply what they are learning in the classroom to their daily lives, if they can apply what they've experienced in life into their classroom work, they're more likely to learn and they are more likely to persist. So that social and academic integration is extremely important.

The final one I want to mention to you today is just the sort of catch all that we call "student learning." In other words, students who are learning are more likely to stay with us, more likely to persist. The more they learn the more valuable they feel their learning is, the more likely they are to persist. If they are not enjoying their learning, if they are not being able to apply their learning, if they are not feeling good about their learning then their commitment goes away now. The student learning is extremely important.

Students who find support for their learning are more likely to persist. Students who get frequent feed back about their learning are more likely to persist. Students who are actively engaged in their learning are more likely to persist. So what we know is learning is extremely important. And again, a big duh.

Those areas of student retention, the work that has been done on student retention can really inform the work we do on campus. So, if we are thinking about student success we are thinking of perspective I want to talk about three paradigm shifts that I have seen and that I think will be really useful to us in our conversation today and then throughout the day.

One is that shift in the institutions are focusing, have focused on in the past, on student retention to a focus on student learning and success. I'll talk more about this later. The second is a shift in focus from student's cognitive abilities to a focus or at least a consideration of their emotional competencies, their emotional intelligence and what's related in that sort of realm as opposed to just looking at the cognitive, the head kinds of stuff. Then a shift from institutions looking at individual and isolated programmatic initiatives to help students succeed to a more comprehensive, coordinated approach to student success and this is where we all come in.

So, let's focus again for a minute on student retention. Again, retention according to whom? First of all, if you think about the word retention. In high school, retention is a good thing, retention means a student passed, no I mean retention is a bad thing in high school, the students are retained in grade 9 or grade 10 or grade 11, they have to repeat, and they are not

progressing along. So retention is not so great in high school. Whereas in college, retention is a good thing, it means students come back. They are persisting in our institution.

I contend that retention is an institutional perspective and that the students think more about persistence. I talked about that a few minutes ago. So I wanted us to reframe our thinking about retention totally. I want you to think about retention as a really low level aspiration. If all we are trying to do is to retain our students then I think that is ethically bankrupt. I think what we will really want our students to do is to drive and succeed and be the best that they can be. If retention is your goal, that's really expecting very little from your students. What I want you to do is think about student learning and success and excellence from an institutional perspective as more of a goal. Retention will be a by-product, will be a result, will be an outcome, of student's success. In other words, if you think about retention not as a goal, but as an outcome, it gives us a better chance of doing really, really good work with our students. Retention again, is a very low level expectation, I guess.

The other thing that I think is very important, no matter whom we are, no matter where we work, no matter what our institution is like; every institution has a mission statement. Every institution has a reason for being. And if we can think about the work that we do, as it relates to our institutional mission, then I think what we do, can be more mainstream, can be more critical to the institution, and can help us frame what it is we are attempting to do, as individuals working to help students be successful. So as soon as success is what we are about, how are we to define student success? Okay, because student success means different things to different people. Well I guess the key here is that the first thing that you need to do is to define it yourself. Many institutions have gone about that exercise, it can be challenging when you have individuals from across an institution thinking about students success.

There is a definition of a student success that was put forth through a book that was published several years ago, um, "challenging and supporting students in their first year." The authors of that text John Gardner and Betsy Barefoot, looked at the right of things that lead up to a student's success, and you'll see on your student handout, the kinds of things that they focused on, when they define first-year student success, and that is that student's make active, develop competence in their academic and develop their intellectual competencies. The second is that they find fulfilling interpersonal relationships. In other words, they connect with others on the campus. That they make progress towards becoming who they want to be, the identity development that makes us. They can think about whom they are, feel comfortable with that and move on, and that they make progress towards deciding on a career and a lifestyle.

We know that first-year students many times, they have not made a decision, or they've made a decision that they are rethinking about a major or active focus. At least they are making progress in understanding the process of making a career decision and moving in that direction, as well as with their lifestyle. They also contend that for students to be successful that they got to be healthy, and they got to have good personal health and they got to buy into the wellness issues. It is more likely that students are successful with their health being well; they also contend that students need to engage in some aspect of civic responsibility, that they need to understand that they are part of a bigger whole, and that the world doesn't revolve around them and that they are responsible for others in their community, as civic responsible citizens.

They also suggest that students need to examine their own faith and spirituality, and that they need to move toward whatever direction they are going with their faith and spirituality. Then finally that they are living, as someone said earlier, in a very diverse world. And that they can learn to appreciate that diversity as opposed to railing against that diversity. And that they embrace that and see the diversity as a positive, positive thing.

Again, Upcraft, Gardner, and Barefoot put this definition of first-year student success out really for us to react to as [inaudible]. And when we're thinking about success in the first year we've

got to define it first. And so if your institution does not have a definition of first-year student success, I'd start asking questions. I'd challenge them to say, well what does success mean for your first-year students. Do we have minimal standards or do we have aspirational standards? And begin to think about what first-year student success looks like. Again, beyond retention. It's beyond retention.

The second thing that I really wanted to talk to you about today has to do with refocusing away from thinking about cognitive skills alone for our students to thinking about a bigger perspective and to begin thinking about the more emotional skills – emotional intelligence skills and competencies. If you think about what institutions base their decisions about college admission on, for the selective institutions and for the open-door institutions, what is it that you think about as you think about students who are successful or not? Typically, in the past we have looked primarily, if not singularly, at cognitive skills. We look at their SAT scores when we are thinking about college admission. Their ACT scores. We look at their high school grades; we look at their high school class rank. If your admissions office uses essays as part of admissions, then they may look at essays. They look at placement tests. They may look at recommendations. All those things are a reflection on their cognitive skills and those cognitive abilities tend to be pretty much set at birth. But they're not really teachable. You can teach facts and figures and help students learn how to think, but you're not going to be able to change their basic cognitive abilities tremendously. Whereas on the other side of things, what we know about students who succeed or don't succeed, is that the reason they give us for their either success or lack of success doesn't have to do with their academic abilities. It doesn't have to do generally with their cognitive ability.

If we accept a student to come to our institutions we are saying that they can succeed because it would be ethically wrong for us to accept students who can't succeed. So anybody who gains admission should be able to succeed on our campuses, but we know they don't all succeed.

So what I want you to do now is to turn to someone by you again and to talk about what are the differences between the students on your campus who succeed and those that don't? How would you describe them? What are the characteristics of those who shine – the stars on the campus and those that come for a semester, a quarter or two, and either struggle on or never come back? What differentiates those two sets of students? Talk for a few minutes between yourselves.

Okay, if I can have your attention, I want you to help me. What I'd like to do is have you help me illustrate the different emotional intelligence competencies. Let me tell you a little bit about why I think this is so critical and why I think this is such important work.

I had been working with undergraduate students through our first-year seminar at the University of South Carolina for probably 25 years when suddenly my own children were approaching college. And it's amazing how that gives you a different perspective, doesn't it? I have two children. The same father, the same home, the same schools, the same – everything. Except for one's a guy and one's a gal. And they're three years apart. And one of them is still struggling at 24. He just can't quite get his act together. The other is a senior in college, is getting ready to graduate with honors – Phi Beta Kappa. Doing everything that a parent could want a child to do. And as I began learning about emotional intelligence, it was kind of like – here's the illustration of my two children. One that is highly functioning on the emotional intelligence competencies and one who still has a lot to learn.

So as I started learning about this and realizing how critical this was, I started thinking you know, this is going to change the way I teach. This is going to change the approach that I take toward the work that I do. And what I am seeing in higher education is that more and more people are sort of having that same "ah-ha" that I have had. That emotional intelligence competencies can

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be taught. You can help students develop those competencies far more so than you can help them enhance their cognitive abilities.

So what I want to do is, I've looked at emotional intelligence from a lot of different perspectives and the one that I've sort of grabbed onto because it is pretty easy to understand is the work Reuven Bar-On has done. What he has done is divided emotional intelligence competencies into 15 different sub-scales within five different scales. You'll see the ones on your handout that I want to talk about. What I want to do is to ask you to help me illustrate those different competencies based on your conversations in the groups that you just engaged in. Hopefully, we'll have an example for each one of these, but I know we can an example of some.

So what I want to just talk through each one of these and I want you to share with me an anecdote about a student that you know who either is highly functioning or not on that particular scale. Then, if we can, I'd like for us to think about how we might influence those students and what services on our campuses or what programs on our campuses might help us to teach students tools to advance that particular competency. Does that sound like something that you all could help me do? Yes, I hope. Okay.

Again, there are five sub-scales. The first sub-scale is that of "intrapersonal." Intrapersonal sub-scale. The first competency on that intrapersonal scale is self-regard. And Bar-On has defined that as, "the ability to respect yourself and to accept yourself as basically good." Self-regard. To sort of accept who you are and to think of yourself as particularly good.

What examples in your conversations are related to either a high self-regard or a particularly low self-regard? Any examples? Yes.

[Audience member] "Purple backpack guy. Okay, we have purple backpack guy who is a master's student in women's studies and carries a purple backpack – thus the name. He comes into the office and he sets his books down. He says, 'I am the best student. I have a 4.0 and I'm in women's studies and I want you to give me free money to go to school. You know, I study in Japan.' That was two years ago. But it's every year. He knows that he is the greatest, but he's an older student, too. He's been through college and he just knows that his skills need something else."

[Stuart Hunter] Okay, so this young man has extremely high self-regard. Perhaps inflated. [audience laughter]. So there is a lack of reality testing. So we can have extremely high self-regard, but it can be over the top, too much, invalidated. That can be a weakness as well. Any other examples of self regard? Remember the purple backpack guy will get down to near the bottom of this list. (End part II)

The second one is assertiveness; most of us know what that means, the ability to express feelings, beliefs and thoughts, and stand up for my own rights, without being hurtful or destructive to others. An example of someone with extremely well-developed assertiveness skills or not, continues to develop assertiveness skills. Can you stand or yell or something. A lot of students were asking for their financial aid are extremely assertive and they don't hold back any kind words or whatever they think or perceive that you are withholding their money. I've never seen a student that has a problem with being assertive when it comes to financial aid stuff. They are all out there. So winning through intimidation. Exactly. That doesn't necessarily lead to student's success. Exactly. Right. It alienates people, it doesn't move them in a direction that they want to be moved. But if they were to learn how to be affectively assertive as opposed to aggressive they might be more likely to win friends than influence enemies. Anybody on the other end of the scale?

Have you seen students on the other end of the scale sort of passive aggressive on the other end of the scale. This is a student who is a first generation college student, who may have

come in through a special program or may not have, but they arrive on the college campus not really feeling like they belong, not knowing how they fit in, and being rather intimidated by other students in class and professors. They don't participate in activities, they don't participate in student organizations, don't respond to mentoring programs and they very privately want to keep a low profile, but don't feel good about being here. So the shrinking violet, the person who doesn't engage in programs that might help them, who has the lack of self regard perhaps, but who is just sort of there and not making the most of opportunities. Less assertive, more passive.

The third one I want to look at is the one that is entitled emotional-self awareness, the ability to know what you are feeling. The ability to understand your feelings and to put them in perspective. Any examples that would relate to that? I met with a student yesterday, she was probably in her mid twenties and she was a little bit on the less assertive scale, but she convinced herself to come in and talk to me and she said, "you know, when I was 18, if I was in the same situation I was in now, I would have been ranting and raving and my mom has just been so in awe that I am making an appointment with the Dean. I am talking about it, I'm planning what I am going to say and I am walking through a process in a logical way." She said, "I still understand that I am angry, but I also understand that I need to communicate." So she did a good job. That is an example of someone that is emotionally self aware and who is making the most of that. Anybody on the opposite end of that scale? The person who came in the financial aid office . . . (Inaudible.) Emotional self-aware, minus, minus, minus. Right, exactly. We are seeing the sort of continuum on these. Let's look at the next one.

This is an easy one, independence. The ability to think, act and have feelings without relying on others. Not everybody jump at once. Example, "every academic year, I don't know mom does that. I don't know why it is not done, my mom does that." Mom has always done that for me. Exactly, same kind of story. Audience member question: Same kind of story with the helicopter parent. I had a parent in my office a couple weeks back and she was just out of her mind angry because she had filled out a verification worksheet for the parent . . . I mean, the parent filled it out for the student, the student didn't signed it and she was angry and rude to me and proceeded to call him six or seven times and demand that he come out of class right now, to come and sign this right now. And he came to my office and he was like this, he couldn't say anything.

[Stuart Hunter] The student she is describing here is the one who has the attack helicopter parent. I think helicopter parents can be getting a bad rap. I think there can be good helicopter parents . . . sometimes, but most the ones we know of are the "Blackhawk Down" kind. So, the parent has never let the student develop independence. They're still doing things for them. The best story I've heard on this was from someone in orientation, in an orientation program, not at my campus, somewhere else. The mother was at orientation and she came and said that she wanted to have a picture taken on the id and when they said, "no the ids are only for students," she said "well, I'm the one who's going to be doing the things for my child, so my picture needs to be on it." Real story! So, independence is pretty easy to capture.

The next one is self actualization; the ability to become all we can be without placing limits on ourselves. Anybody have an example of that one? I think we a lot of times see this in our adult students who have been self-limiting themselves for many years and now they're going back to school. They're beginning to want to do things, but they're still caught in that box of what they were before and they sometimes have a hard time of thinking about what is all that I can be. Any specific examples about the self actualization? Yes.

[Audience member] This happened years ago, back when students had to sign their promissory notes for the guaranty agency. I had a student who was a quadriplegic who people thought would never be able to do anything, yet, when I said to him "David, the 'x' on your note wasn't accepted by the Michigan Guaranty Agency," he took his motorized wheelchair downtown Lansing, from MSU's campus, and signed the note in front of them so they could accept his

signature. I don't know that he thought he had limits, but everybody around him thought he had limits and he far exceeded those.

[Stuart Hunter] That's great, wonderful story. Alright, so those are the five subscales under intrapersonal, now we are going to look at interpersonal. The first one under interpersonal is empathy; the ability to recognize and understand and accept feelings of other people. Any examples that relate to either high-functioning empathy or low-functioning empathy? Any students that we know that have either been successful or have struggled? It's all about me, isn't it? I'm the only one that matters. Those who can't do . . . too bad, tough. Lack of empathy.

[Audience member] We've come to a period in the semester where getting through first exams and were getting a lot of students coming in talking about dropping. I spoke with a young man on the phone yesterday that really impressed me. They tend to tell you their hard luck story and everything that goes along with it. But this young man gave me a really sincere point when he said "ya know, it's not all the professor's fault. I don't want you to think I'm just blaming her. She's really good." After the conversation, I thought, you know, this is a kid who's going to be successful because he understands it's not just him. He can see that this professor is doing what she is supposed to be doing and somehow the two of them aren't meshing yet. He was very self aware and he was very cognoscente of the situation and all the factors that play. So what is right now normally kind of a difficult call or conversation for us turned out to be a really pleasant experience with this particular gentleman. You can't help but walk away from that conversation thinking, I think he's got some skills here that could make him successful in his career and his life. He's seeing the bigger picture.

[Stuart Hunter] Good. Did you all here that in the back? A student came in, a time in the semester student's are coming in to drop classes. This young man came in to speak with her yesterday to drop a class and was able to see that the problem he was having in class was not the professor's fault totally, that he had done some things that sort of put him in the position he's in now and that it wasn't the professor's fault. I think that sometimes that's easier said than done for students.

The next one is social responsibility; the ability to cooperate, to be positive, and to be helpful in a group. Anything you've seen related to that?

[Audience member] About a year and a half ago, we instituted a new thing in our front lobby where we actually have a computer sign in. Student's can put in their id number and their name. It can take as little as a name. Depending on where the student's are with technology, for some that this is not an issue they're well practiced at it and for others can fumble over it for quite a time. You'll be helping another student and they'll be trying to get help just signing in at the computer. You'll see some students have no problem going "oh no, you just have to backspace . . . ok scroll down . . . there you go." There's no problem for them to see this can be an issue for someone else and help them out. You can tell that they've got a better ability to help out society that way.

[Stuart Hunter] Yeah, just helping when you see someone in need, helping them. I used to give my student's an assignment that they needed to do one random act of kindness every day. Then report on that when they came to class. What did you do that was a random act of kindness? It's a wonderful way to raise the dialog about our civic and social responsibility to the world around us. That's a great example.

The third in this interpersonal arena is interpersonal relationships; the ability to make and keep friends who I can be close to and share my feeling with. Any examples related to interpersonal relationships?

[Audience member] Just in general, students who will come and complain about their roommates. Either they are an only child or they've never had to share a room. Not being able to understand compromise and getting along with somebody who you're sharing a space with for 24 hours a day. A lot of complaints that I hear from students are about the terrible roommate. So, you just wonder how much they've tried to get along with the roommate, how they've tried to establish a relationship. They don't have to be your best friend, but they are your roommate for the semester or for the year so you do need to learn to get along.

[Stuart Hunter] Yeah, exactly. Knowing and accepting others and knowing how to interact with others in ways that create harmony and more positive feelings.

The next three are on what's called the adaptability scale. The first is reality testing; the ability to see and understand what's really happening by sticking to the facts. Our student who came in to talk about dropping a class is a great example of this one as well. They realized what was going on and it wasn't all them that there was something happening interrelated and they were able to understand exactly what was happening. Unlike our "purple backpack guy" who didn't have that at all.

The next one is flexibility; the ability to change my feelings, attitudes, and behaviors depending on the situation. Any examples that might relate to this one? We've heard a couple already that are somewhat related to this. The extremely aggressive student, who comes in to demand their aid, is not terribly flexible. Darn it, I'm going to just bulldoze my way through this and that situation is not necessarily the way they aught to be adapting.

[Audience member] I'm just going to generalize a little bit here because I see this happen so often. Student's will go in to Financial Aid and be very aggressive and then they'll say all right we're going to send you down to the Dean, right, and so then they give you a heads up, hey, you know, this is the problem, this person is really upset and their really mad and they're really aggressive, and they come down, sit in my office and they are just the sweetest, and they leave all happy, and I call back to the financial aid office and I say, "Thank you for sending me that student, it just made my day." They are going "What?!" It is so typical; when it comes to money emotions run really high, so your flexibility level is much lower, and then you get out of that situation and their flexibility starts coming out as their dealing with other people, who don't have a direct relationship with the money.

[Stuart Hunter] The other thing that your story tells me is that isn't not only our students who can enhance their emotional intelligence skills, it's a life long process, and we are all working on these things through out time. A lot of times a student will unload on somebody else, whether that be their parents, someone in the financial aid office, or someone else, then it is sort of cathartic, they've gotten it out. And then they can be civil to other people.

[Audience member] I want to tag on to that, does the financial aid office share with you? Like happens in our school, the student then comes back to the financial aid office and lets them know that they went to the people above them got them to give them their way and they think to bypass you in the future. I'm always looking for ways to try to help us deal with that, and try to make that a positive on both ways. We probably all share that in the room, the frustrations of that.

[Stuart Hunter] Right, right. Problem solving is also again the ability to see problems, explain them and have ways to solve them as they relate to the kinds of things we have just been talking about.

The two scales under the stress management scale which I think, at least from the students that I know at the University of South Carolina, this is big, and these are big. The first is stress tolerance, the ability to deal with difficult things without falling apart. Whether they fall apart in

the financial aid office and then go to somewhere else and get what they need, or whatever. They tend to sometimes be low functioning students, they simply falling apart, they just can't deal with it. As they develop, and progress, and enhance some of these skills, they are much more able to deal with difficult things without falling apart. The one that I see time and time again is impulse control. The ability to think before acting, the ability to say "no not now, maybe later." Do you see this in students?

[Audience member] Yes, I will always remember the student who kicked my trash can. It was such a big loud explosion right next to me. Plus, I thought it was quite aggressive, I mean that trash can obviously was me! (Laughter in the background.) I will always remember that, it was fearful.

[Stuart Hunter] Students, and all of us for that matter, impulse control is very much related to others, but a critical issues, especially I think, for our late adolescent students.

The last two have to do with general mood. And the first one is the one of optimism. The ability to keep a positive attitude and to say, you know "If I fail, I can try again and succeed." The other is just one of happiness. The ability to be satisfied with my life, enjoy myself, enjoy others, and have fun. One of the most important variables in student success is the ability to think "I can do this" and to have a respective of optimism and to be generally positive about the future.

I hope you find these useful. I think that as we think about what we do with students, these emotional intelligence skills I find very empowering. Especially as we work with our lower academic ability students. You know we can have a real impact with students as we work with them.

So how do institutions go about working with students? You are all involved with students in one way or another either directly or indirectly, but there are lots of different ways institutions attempt to influence student success. They do so through their student recruitment, how they go about recruiting students.

I think what we need to think about here is how are our students being recruited and does the rest of the institution know how those students are being recruited? If you have not looked at your Admission's propaganda recently, I would encourage you do that because if those of us working in the institution are going to be delivering on promises that are being made to students in the recruitment phase, we need to know what those promises are and so I would encourage you not only to look at that yourself, but to encourage everybody else on your campus to look at what those materials look like.

Second, a lot of institutions, almost every institution, has some sort of formal orientation program for new students. Those programs are more and more including not only programs for the students, but includes something for the families and the parents. One of the things I wanted to share with you, and I just brought one each of these and I will let you all pass them around. Through our national resource center, we have published three different guides for parents and families of students because especially with our first generation college students, we think it's important for families to understand what the student is going to be experiencing. So we have these three little guides that I will just pass around. One is just a guide to student success for parents. There's a similar one that is made just for commuter student, parents and families, and the third one is a guide for understanding academic advising. We talked earlier about the differences between high school and college, let me just pass these around and let you all take a look at them. We talked early on about the difference between high school and college and one of the differences we didn't talk about was the role of the counselor as opposed to the academic advisor. For many parents and families, understanding academic advising can be very empowering to them, so I am passing those around and let you all take a look at them.

So student recruitment, new student orientation, colleges and universities tend to spend a lot of resources and a lot of time in those first couple weeks of class. Many campuses are doing special events for first year students as they matriculate and come on campus: Welcome Week activities, different kinds of rituals, programs, and traditions on campus. How many of you have a first year reading program of some sort? Any kind of summer reading where common reading where every new student comes on campus and reads something. That seems to be getting a lot of legs.

The academic advising piece is extremely important. The academic advising relationship is one relationship that has the potential to span the entire undergraduate experience in an institution, whereas each semester a student can go from one set of classes and instructors, to another set of classes and instructors, to another as each term passes. Whereas the academic advisor may be the only person that a single student has contact with throughout the entire undergraduate experience so there is a real power in academic advising.

A number of campuses are also creating academic support centers or academic achievement centers that include a variety of different programs; from early alert programs, to supplemental instruction, to financial literacy kinds of issues. A number of institutions are also engaging students in undergraduate research opportunities that tend to be at the research one institutions.

How many of you have on your campus have any sort of curricular learning communities paired or linked courses? This is another strategy that a lot of campuses are engaging in undergraduate learning communities.

Many, many campuses have some form of a first-year seminar where students are taught in small classes in their first semester; their first year. They take a variety of different forms. This is an area where it is very easy, I think, for financial literacy and financial issues to be included in the curriculum. (End Part III)

Are there other ways in which your campus is addressing student success strategies? Anything I haven't mentioned?

[(Audience member] Mentoring program.

[Stuart Hunter] Mentoring programs. Yes. Say two sentences about one at your campus.

[Audience member] Faculty and staff are asked if they'd like to mentor an incoming freshman student.

Faculty and staff are asked if they would like to mentor an incoming freshman student. We also have community family members who are bringing the students into their homes for a Sunday dinner or to pumpkin carve or to do family type activities so it is connecting the individual student with an individual on that campus, faculty, staff or someone in the community. Very powerful. There are also a number of places that are using mentoring programs for upper class students, upper level students on a four-year campus, especially peer leaders through either residence halls or through, of course, your seminars or through other structures working upper level students. Anything else on your campuses that you all are doing related to student success that we haven't mentioned yet?

[Audience member] We do a summer incentive program for students that are not quite admissible to the school. They do like a seven week boot-camp course where their days are heavily structured, work two hours and you all go to class together, you all eat together, you all have a mentor (not audible) and if they come out of that, good grades, they go back to (not audible) Great! The generic term for what she is describing with her summer boot camp is

called a summer bridge program. The students come in whether they are largely admissible or not come in early to actually do some work to help them to be successful.

[Stuart Hunter] Anything else?

[Audience member] We have something and I am not sure what year it starts, might be eighth grade, but students are identified and then one of the offices on campus works and they basically sign a contract and they come in like once a month on Saturday, so they are kind of a cohort group moving through their high school years and if they complete the program then they have tuition guaranteed for that program so when they are probably higher-risk students that have been identified so they have a mentor on campus that meets perhaps with their counselor at the high school keeping an eye on them to see what is going on because they have to maintain a certain grade point average in high school, so there is an expectation from them.

[Stuart Hunter] Starting very, very early with middle school students, I don't know if yours is part of the Federal TRIO programs or not, but there has been in the past significant grant funding for a protocol talent search out of the TRIO and starts in the middle schools and helps students that might not normally be tracked to go to college, to think about college as an option and work with the students from early on. Early college is something very similar where we work with students early before they get on campus whether through credit courses or just grooming them to think about college.

In the summer, they come together for several weeks every summer because I was talking with a mother and she said her daughter missed (I don't know exactly what happened), they become friends with other students then from other high schools (not audible).

Thank you for your help on this and I see my time is running short, so let me zip through these other things that I intended to talk about and point you in the direction some additional resources. I guess what I want to say here is that student's success is everybody's business. One of the things that we want to avoid on our campus is to think about student success as being the responsibility of an office or a person. Every time I hear that a campus who appointed a Director of Student Retention or Director of Student Success, I sort of shutter to think that oh, no, that will let everyone else off the hook. It is not something that any one office or program or individual can be responsible for on campus. It is up to all of us to make sure that student success happens. It takes a village, it takes a campus.

The other thing is that asks all these types of programs that we just described are on campuses. We want to make sure that they are not operating silently. We want to make sure they are working together to think about student success from a comprehensive and institution wide perspective, especially difficult on large complex campuses, but I think it is extremely important for this to be done.

There are a number of implications for what we have been talking about for you as educators; we are all educators no matter what our role is. Whether we are teaching in the classroom or whether we are teaching each one of our interactions with the students in our offices. We need to understand our students as we said earlier. We need to realize that student changes, institution changes, our culture changes and what we do with and for students also has to change.

We need to adapt our efforts to not only think about supporting students, that's important, but we also need to challenge students. If we provide all this challenge and no support that's disastrous. If we provide all the support and no challenges that can be disastrous as well because as we know for students in order to be fulfilled and to succeed and to continue to persist they need to be challenged, they need to be learning. Challenges and support are both extremely important.

One thing that I think is also very important, we can do this no matter what our role in on campus. That is to provide students with the opportunity for significant reflection. To have them think about what am I learning, how I am using what I am learning, what I am experiencing, how's that going to influence how I approach the world in the future. Significant reflection can be extremely powerful in our fast paced lives today, we sometimes don't take time to sit back, and to analyze and think about our experiences. Think about how they might, what we do in the future and where we go next. I would also encourage you to think about what you can do on your campus to establish powerful communities on campus.

If each of us thinks back about things that were most influential to us, in our personal development in our own educational and personal growth, my guess is that many of us would describe something related to a group or learning situation or some sort of community. Whether that is a group you were involved with on campus, a bridge club, or a church group, or a Boy Scout troop, or what. Most of learning really powerful learning experience has been within a group setting. What a better place than a college or university campus to provide those learning experiences through community, just something to think about.

I have already mentioned the key piece of how we are all responsible for this and not work in silence. Have any of your campuses been involved in the Foundations of Excellence program? It is a program operated out of the policy center for the first-year college and you will see the Web site back in the resources. It started out as a grant funded program where institutions engage in significant process to really look at the first year and look at student success and develop better ways going about doing what they are doing with first-year students. If this is something that you think your campus might be interested in, I would encourage you to take a look at that Web site and resources. They basically really look at the first year from a compressive fashion. They have a structured way they do this.

So what we still need to do, what we can do as individuals. I think we need to seriously address the unacceptable rates of student attrition that is what this whole talk has been about. What can we do to help students succeed, to help them persist, and help them to be successful. We need to focus more on student learning and success than focusing on retention, again that minimal level. Retention, think bigger, think broader, think more aspirationally. We need to make student learning more central to our institutional mission. Think about what you do in whatever role you are in as contributing to student learning because you do teach students everyday in the way you interact with them. You teach them not only content, but you teach them a process on how to go about accomplishing this. How to go about learning, how to go about getting things done. We need to develop additional partnerships across campus.

I bet that each and every one of you in this room can think about other programs on your campus where your work could be extended, to be advanced, if you were to partner with one other group on campus. I know we will be hearing more about this later in the day from some of the other presenters. I think we need to again define student success on a local level, to think about how we define student success from other means for the student to be successful.

We need to bring students into the conversation, we need to not make assumptions about what they need and what they want and what they should do, but bring them into the conversation and test out some of those assumptions. They can be some of our best resources. We need to bring our teaching into the 21st century. I still rely on the lecture method, unfortunately that was the only way I had to share this information with you today. We need to think globally, we need to think that we, each one of us as an individual, can make a difference, and we can through our interactions with our students on a daily basis that we can make a difference in the lives of students and therefore influence the future of our country and our world.

So what are the implementations for you as folk working with students through financial aid and through the loan process and through the initiatives to help students become more financially literate. Well again from the other assistance programs on campus, you cannot do it all yourself, but I think you have a lot of knowledge and experience to help students become more successful. Continually raise awareness across the broad section on campus about the importance about the work you do and the importance about the work of students as they become more and more financially responsible, that is certainly important. I think you can provide daily research results. You know about what works through the work that you do. You have data that you can share with the rest of your people. I would encourage you to do that. Even if it's not even particularly good news, it's still important for others on campus to know. I would encourage you to attempt to infiltrate the committee structure on your campus, to get a seat at the table, to begin to think about what you do. This needs to be known across campus, how we can impact student success in any variety of ways. It gives you a chance to always advocate for student success. And what could be more important at our institutions than student success.

In closing, I want to thank you again for the opportunity to talk with you. I have learned a lot and look forward to the rest of the day to learning more. Any comments, reactions, or questions on what I have thrown on you throughout the day? You all awake? Does this make sense? Does it feel alien to you? What kind of thoughts do you have? This is the structure reflection. Opportunity for reflection.

Audience feedback—Our focus needs to be at a much earlier time in a child's life than just when they are incoming freshmen to the college. There needs to be the basic skills of budget and saving for a future goal. I see this as a life lesson not just a college freshmen student lesson. Colleges and universities can't do it alone. They need to do something with what they have, what their sphere of influence is. I am actually leaving tonight to go to Washington to have a meeting with some folks at the Department of Education to talk with them about that exact thing, how colleges and universities can work together with high schools to better each others efforts.

It's strange to me hearing this over and over, that once upon a time, maybe 20 years ago, colleges were not so concerned with retention as such a broad issue, maybe just for certain populations. Now that it is such a broad issue due to financial reasons, we are still struggling with an institutional grasp with this issue, not just with certain departments or offices. One, the frontiers that we have been struggling with, those of us who work in the area, is what I call the last frontier, getting facility to buy into this and change how they do things. They have the captive audience on campus. I have learned to temper my discussion in certain arenas as we talk about student learning.

You are using your well-developed, emotional, intelligence skills to influence the faculty. You are right, especially on commuter campuses, the faculty are key. The more we can help the faculty to think about student learning and student success as opposed to student retention. We will be much more effective in our work.

It's funny, the financial situation that our country is in there are going to be some difficult decisions to be made. On our campus we just learned this week we have to take a 15 percent budget cut this semester. We're talking with most colleges and universities most of the budget is personnel. To take a 15 percent budget cut it's going to be grim. It's going to be a real test of institutional values and priorities. It is not going to be happy for a lot of people, but student learning still has to be at the center because after all we are an institution of higher education.

Any other reactions, thoughts, or reflections? Thank you for your attention I look forward to being here the rest of the day!

(END)